

## FACTS ON ABORTION

- There were 1.4 million abortions performed in North America in 2008.<sup>1</sup>
  - One in 5 pregnancies ended in abortion in 2008, worldwide.<sup>2</sup>
  - In 2008 21.6 million abortions took place in unsafe conditions.<sup>3</sup>
- 47,000 maternal deaths (13% of all maternal deaths) in developing countries are caused by complications from unsafe abortions.<sup>4</sup>

## BARRIERS

### ...TO ACCESS

- 97% of ob-gyns encountered patients seeking abortion care in 2011, while only 14% performed abortions.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2011 more than ½ of women of reproductive age in the US lived in states hostile to abortion rights, up from 1/3 of women of reproductive age in 2000.<sup>6</sup>
- Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec are the only Canadian provinces with physicians who provide abortions past 20 weeks.<sup>7</sup>
- 37 US states require parental involvement for young women seeking abortions.<sup>8</sup>
- The US Congress has barred the use of federal Medicaid funds to pay for abortions, except when the woman's life would be endangered by full-term pregnancy or in cases of rape or incest.<sup>9</sup>
- Healthcare professionals and institutions in the US can refuse to provide abortion services without facing any legal or professional consequences.<sup>10</sup>

### ...TO EDUCATION

- 25% of ob-gyn clerkships in the US report no formal abortion training.<sup>11</sup>
- Only 33.6% and 39.8% of family medicine program directors and chief residents respectively report receiving clinical experience in any abortion method.<sup>12</sup>
- Less than 10% of family medicine residency programs offer routine training in first trimester abortion.<sup>13</sup>
- One of the biggest obstacles to safe, legal abortion is the absence of trained abortion providers.<sup>14</sup>

### ...TO PROVISION

- 39 US states have “physician only” provisions in their abortion laws which exclude other qualified health care professionals (PAs, NPs, nurse-midwives, etc.) from performing abortions.<sup>15</sup>
- A national probability sample in 2009 showed that 57% of ob-gyn abortion providers were aged 46-65.<sup>16</sup>
- 39 % of ob-gyns who receive abortion training work in hospitals where abortion provision is prohibited.<sup>17</sup>
- In Canada, there was a 24% decrease in abortions provided by hospitals between 1994 and 2009.<sup>18, 19</sup> This means that women are being required to attain their procedures in private clinics where insurance coverage is limited.
- Physicians who did not provide abortions after completing an elective through the national Reproductive Health Program (RHP) cited lack of skills, liability concerns, and difficulty obtaining supplies as their main barriers to provision.<sup>20</sup>

## PROMISING TRENDS

- 2011's most high-profile fight over abortion ended on a positive note when Mississippi voters defeated a ballot measure to amend the state constitution that was designed to restrict abortion and contraception access by assigning personhood at conception.<sup>21</sup>
- After participating in MSFC's Reproductive Health Externship (RHE) program, students were more supportive of abortion provision, more inclined to provide abortions in the future, and twice as likely to feel comfortable counseling patients about abortion.<sup>22</sup>
- The youngest ob-gyns, those 35 or younger, were the most likely to declare their intention to provide abortions in a 2011 survey of practicing US ob-gyns.<sup>23</sup>

### Works Cited

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<sup>16</sup>Stulberg 2011.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Catalogue no. 82-223-xie: *Induced Abortion Statistics 2003*. Ottawa, Canada: Statistics Canada, 2006.

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<sup>23</sup>Stulberg 2011.